

South Shore CARES Partnership

2026 Application Overview

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The South Shore Youth Prevention Team seeks to prevent opioid misuse and substance use among youth by creating a regional, youth-led prevention infrastructure across the South Shore communities of Cudahy, Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, and St. Francis. The project aims to strengthen protective factors, elevate youth voice, and shift community norms surrounding substance use through leadership development, peer engagement, and community-based prevention strategies.

SCOPE OF WORK AND KEY ACTIVITIES

The project has five primary goals and outcomes:

1. Establish a South Shore Youth Advisory Board representing all four communities.
2. Increase youth knowledge of opioid risks, fentanyl exposure, and prevention strategies.
3. Shift youth and community norms around substance use through peer-led education and messaging.
4. Strengthen protective factors including school connectedness, healthy coping skills, and trusted adult relationships.
5. Create a sustainable youth prevention infrastructure that continues beyond the grant period.
6. Recruiting and retaining at least 25 youth leaders across the South Shore region.
7. Increasing negative attitudes toward opioid misuse and early substance use by 20%.
8. Increasing school connectedness and access to trusted adults by 5%.
9. Increasing confidence in healthy coping skills by 10%.
10. Reaching at least 5,000 youth, parents, and community members through prevention messaging and outreach activities.

SCOPE OF WORK AND KEY ACTIVITIES

The project will be implemented through the South Shore CARES partnership between the Cudahy Health Department, the Oak Creek Health Department, and the South Milwaukee/St. Francis Health Department. Activities include:

1. Recruiting youth leaders through schools, service organizations, and existing student leadership programs.
2. Providing training in opioid prevention, fentanyl awareness, healthy coping, leadership development, and community advocacy.
3. Reviewing local Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Community Health Assessment data with youth participants.
4. Supporting youth-led prevention campaigns, school awareness initiatives, and social media messaging.
5. Conducting community education events and parent engagement activities.
6. Developing mentorship opportunities and succession planning to sustain youth leadership over time.
7. Creating a South Shore Youth Prevention Toolkit to support long-term implementation and replication.

TARGET POPULATION AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The target population is youth and adolescents living in the South Shore communities of Cudahy, Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, and St. Francis, a region of more than 86,000 residents where nearly 20% of the population is under age 18. The initiative prioritizes students experiencing risk factors such as low school connectedness, limited access to supportive adults, mental health concerns, and exposure to substance use.

By empowering young people as prevention leaders and credible messengers, the project will strengthen resilience, improve mental health and wellness, reduce risk factors associated with opioid misuse, and build a culture of healthy coping and community connectedness across the South Shore region. The long-term vision is a sustainable, youth-driven prevention movement that becomes embedded within local schools, communities, and public health systems.